

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

the palace of the Senator, who fled at their approach, and, breaking in, took his seat on the bench as judge, and condemned Andrea to instant execution. He was promptly beheaded ; but when, a month or so later, Noccio tried to repeat this process with one of Andrea's associates, the government interfered, and deprived him of the authority they had so strangely given.

With some difficulty the tumults were thus appeased in the city. But, indignant at the affront offered to their house, the Salimbeni rose in arms in the contado. Niccolo di Niccolo Salimbeni seized Montemassi, Cione di Sandro Salimbeni harried the district of Montepulciano, Agnolino di Giovanni Salimbeni, the virtual head of the house, ravaged the hills and valleys about Montalcino; while others of the family with their adherents made war elsewhere in the contado, and defied the forces of the Republic. From Perugia, the Abbot of Marmoutier sent agents to both parties, offering to mediate, but was suspected (with good reason) of having a secret understanding with the Salimbeni. A more genuine pacific offer from the Florentines was rejected by the latter, who would hear of no terms while their kinsman's blood was unavenged. Within Siena itself, the faction of the Dodicini was secretly favouring the rebels. The Signoria appointed a magistracy of ten to carry on the war, imprisoned twenty-five of the Dodicini, extorted a heavy sum of money from them in fines, and sent for aid, which was promptly granted in horse and foot, to Florence and to Lucca.

It was at this time that Catherine first left the territory of her native city. Moved by the conflicting reports that had reached his ears, the General of the order, Fra Elias of Toulouse, summoned her to attend the chapter-general which met at Florence in May. "There came to Florence," writes an anonymous Florentine contemporary, "in the month of May, 1374, when the chapter of the Friars Preachers was held, at the command of the Master of the order, one wearing the habit of the sisters of penance of St. Dominic, who was called Caterina di Jacomo di Benincasa of Siena, who was of the age of twenty-seven years, and whom we deemed to be a great servant of God. And with her she had